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## KENNEDY-LUGAR YOUTH EXCHANGE AND STUDY (K-L YES) PROGRAM

### US DEPARTMENT OF STATE FUNDED SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

**Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study (K-L YES)** is a program that was established in October, 2002 and sponsored by U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs to provide scholarships for secondary school students from countries with significant Muslim populations to spend up to one academic year in the U.S. The program is vital to expanding communication between the people of the United States and the partner countries in the interest of promoting mutual understanding and respect. In August 2007, the first Bahraini K-L YES participants embarked on an unprecedented exchange program.

Scholarship recipients live with host families, attend U.S. high schools, and participate in special enrichment activities that include community service, youth leadership training, a civics education program, and other activities that help them develop a comprehensive understanding of American culture and develop leadership skills. Likewise, these students serve as cultural ambassadors for their home countries, representing their own rich heritage to their American host communities.

By participating in this program, K-L YES students have the opportunity to:

- Live with an American family
- Study at a U.S. high school
- Participate in a youth leadership training program
- Experience U.S. culture and society first hand
- Improve English Language skills
- Make new friends
- Help Americans learn about their country

K-L YES scholarships cover all major expenses, including airfare, room and board, health insurance, pocket money, and educational supplies.

To be eligible to apply for the K-L YES program, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Have a record of high academic achievement
- Demonstrate flexibility and commitment to promoting cross cultural understanding
- Will be between 15 and 17 years old upon arrival in the United States – Date of birth should fall between August 1, 1996 and August 1, 1998
- Will be entering grade 10 or 11 in fall 2013
- Meet minimum English proficiency requirement (50 on the SLEP® Test)
- Are not a U.S. citizen or permanent resident, and were not born in the United States

The selection process is composed of the following steps:

1. Applicants fill out and submit a preliminary application
2. Eligible applicants are invited to take the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP®) Test
3. Candidates who pass the SLEP® are called in to take the TOEFL® Junior Test
4. Candidates that pass the TOEFL® Junior Test are asked to fill out a 24-page application
5. Nominated candidates are asked to come in for an interview with the committee panel.

Upon their return to their home countries after successfully completing the program, K-L YES students are enrolled back into their schools to start the following academic year. The Ministry of Education has been very cooperative in the process of evaluating the transcripts of students and deciding on how many credits can be accounted for to permit the K-L YES students into the next grade level. In case some students do not have all the required credits to move on to the following grade, they are expected to take summer school to make up for any missing credits.

K-L YES students, after the completion of the program and return to their home countries, are expected to apply their leadership and community service skills in their home communities.